



Speaker Profile



Steve Deist

An Expert in Market Access and Distribution Channel Strategy

An engaging & candid speaker, Steve has more than 20 years of experience in distribution, retail & manufacturing channels. Audiences across industries have given rave reviews to his presentations on:

- Sales force management & compensation
- Data-driven market strategy
- Channel management
- Industry trends
- Customer segmentation
- And more!

“Candidly the best speaker and presentation we’ve ever had.”
- Marketing Group President

To book Steve Deist for your next event or webinar:
Call 321-956-8617 or email Sandie Stewart at [sstewart@ircg.com](mailto:ss Stewart@ircg.com)

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About Steve Deist

Steve Deist is a Partner with Indian River Consulting Group, an experienced-based firm that focuses exclusively on market access and distribution channels. He has more than 20 years of experience and has worked for hundreds of distributor, retail, manufacturer and private equity clients in dozens of lines of trade.

He is a highly rated speaker, a permanent University of Industrial Distribution faculty member and a distribution company board director.

Steve is IRCG's strategy guru, focused on helping companies achieve lasting competitive advantage. His hands-on approach enables him to apply leading-edge concepts to the practical realities of daily business.

Steve's speaking engagements have included workshops, technical sessions for management-level audiences, strategic sessions for executive-level audiences and keynote speeches. He speaks to individual distribution and manufacturing companies, trade associations, buying and marketing groups and more.



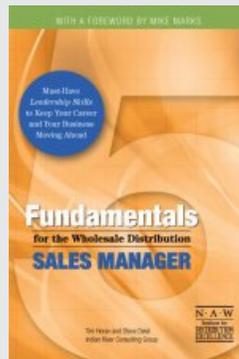
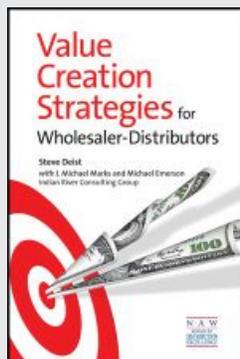
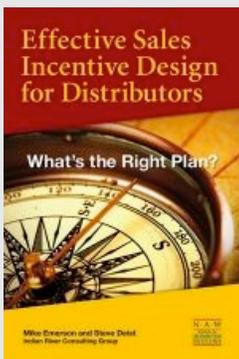
Steve believes each speaking engagement should be tailored to the audience.

In a typical engagement, Steve develops a content outline based on client needs and industry experience. He incorporates input using interviews with audience members and refines the outline based on client feedback.

More technical sessions typically include a workbook for individual or team exercises. Steve has found that audience engagement and retention are far higher when there is active involvement such as working through a real world example of the concept, discussing it with others, or completing personal and reflective exercises.

Watch now: tinyurl.com/SteveDeist

Books by Steve Deist



Published by the National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors

What Readers Say:

"A must read for any distribution executive looking for growth."

"This book will be of great benefit for any distributor who wants to develop an effective strategy, especially those who don't know where to start."

"This clear grounding in distributor reality forced me to take all of their findings seriously regardless of how much they conflicted with my own internal beliefs."

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“This was the capstone to my week of education at the University of Industrial Distribution. It was exactly what I had hoped it to be plus more. The best presentation style and content for the last session of an informative week. Thank you.” - *President*

Popular Speaking Topics

The Profit Sandwich

The sales force feeds us all, but it is often the biggest hurdle faced in profit improvement initiatives. The answer is usually not more training, CRM software or tweaks to the commission plan. The right approach is to deploy your sales and marketing resources where they can really win, and then eliminating hiding places for poor performance. Steve will provide steps you can take to move from a self-directed sales force to a strategically directed, profit-driven one.

The structure of sales and marketing organizations is the real meat of a B2B strategy. It's the vital ingredient that aligns the day-to-day activities of individual sales reps with your strategic and profit objectives. This session will show how to use analytics to make data-driven decisions on value propositions, low-cost channels, proper selling roles, territory sizing and account assignment. If past efforts at profit improvement have failed, you may have just been using the wrong tool.

Value Creation Strategies

This course is aimed at senior managers and executives (and those who aspire to these positions). It is based on ground-breaking industry research conducted by Steve and his firm and documented in the National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors book *Value Creation Strategies for Wholesaler-Distributors*.

The research concludes that successful B2B sellers have moved beyond a sales-driven paradigm to become market-driven and strategically led. The adoption of a market-driven value creation strategy can yield significant and rapid financial benefits. These returns derive from both competitive advantage and, perhaps less obviously, improved execution and productivity.

This session will arm participants by showing them how to develop and execute successful strategies. It emphasizes practical tools that participants can put to use immediately.

Topics include:

- Connection between market strategy and enterprise shareholder value
- Understanding the difference between what you are selling and what the customer is buying
- Using customer insight to align your company around key market gaps
- The secrets of successful execution

The presentation will include individual exercises so that participants can apply the concepts to their own situations.

Beyond the Self-Directed Sales Force

This session is designed for top executives and sales managers who find themselves asking: “How can I get my sales reps to just do what I want them to do?” The content is based on the National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors’ book *Effective Sales Incentive Design for Distributors: What’s the Right Plan?* It reveals best practices in deploying and managing sales and marketing resources. The session is based on real-world experience of what works, and what doesn’t, in decentralized organizations.

Many organizations are struggling with the challenge of transitioning their sales force



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“Very well done. Extraordinary thinking!” - *Marketing Vice President*

from being self-directed to being management-directed. In some cases they are hesitant to confront the performance and behaviors of their long-tenured field sales force because of the risk to their legacy business.

We don't want to degrade the entrepreneurial drive and customer empathy that make a great rep, but we need to focus them on finding growth and raising profitability.

The sales compensation plan is one part of the answer. The workshop covers the research behind the book, as well as hands-on implementation. Topics include:

- Picking the right tool
- Getting strategic clarity
- Aligning the sales force organization
- Incentive structure fundamentals
- Relative performance techniques

5 Fundamentals of Sales Management

This session is based on the National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors' sales management bible *5 Fundamentals for the Wholesaler Distribution Sales Manager*. It covers effective methods for aligning your sales resources and activities for growth and profitability. Participants see how proven best practices from related markets can be adapted to the realities of their industry.

Over the past several years the science of sales management has rapidly advanced. The fields of evolutionary psychology and neurology have uncovered powerful techniques for motivating knowledge workers and tackling change management challenges. Although we cover many leading-edge concepts, our focus is on practical tools that participants can begin using right away. The session includes hands-on individual and group exercises, and ends with an open question-and-answer period.

Session topics are adjusted based on the available time and the client's specific needs. They may include:

- Coaching and mentoring skills
- Managing the sales function systematically
- Best practices such as targeting, call and time allocation, pipeline management, scorecards and territory reviews
- Realigning the sales force for growth

5 Fundamentals of Sales Management: Sales Rep Workshop

The workshop is designed to be a hands-on session. Participants apply proven best practices to their own situations through a series of examples and exercises. Each participant is provided with templates for sales effectiveness tools, including call budgeting, call planning, call logging and account targeting. As we cover each topic, participants work together to revise the tools to fit their needs. By the end of the workshop, participants have a customized toolset that can be put to use immediately. Participants also leave with assignments for developing ongoing tools. We've found that this approach provides the highest level of ownership and retention of the resulting program.

Session topics may be customized based on time and the client's specific needs.



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“A game-changing experience!”
- Sales Executive

- The use (and abuse) of technology

Max Out Margins with Effective Pricing

Improved pricing practices can be one of the most effective ways to increase bottom-line results quickly, but pricing changes are often complex and risky. This session will outline steps required to implement a world-class pricing program that will grow margins while managing short- and long-term risk. Key areas of focus include:

- Analytics on internal pricing practices, transaction analysis, elasticity, sensitivity patterns, and more
- Strategies and tactics such as commodity leader, value-based, market basket, and functional discounting
- Management tools including metrics, feedback loops, and incentives
- Implementation best practices

A properly designed pricing strategy must be based on customer segments, so this session provides an analytical framework for effective segmentation. Pricing improvement is not an “event”; it is an ongoing effort that requires a support structure and executive ownership to ensure that changes become institutionalized. This session will show how to obtain permanent benefits and continuous improvement.

Future Forces in B2B Markets

Large-scale changes are transforming today’s B2B landscape ... and that means you must lead your company down the path of transformation, too. Nothing less than the future welfare and viability of your organization is at stake. This session centers on understanding these fundamental forces and how to turn them from potential threats into opportunities.

These forces are:

- The buffet of choice - Customers are taking control of the sales process and information flow. This goes far beyond “e-commerce.” It encompasses social, local and mobile technologies (known collectively to the digerati as “SoLoMo”) and affects everything from working habits to organizational status.
- The search for growth - Mature markets and a stagnant economy are driving industry consolidation, share battles and invasions of nontraditional markets. Almost every player is a predator, potential prey or directly affected.
- The workforce cliff - A generation of experience is exiting business, taking irreplaceable tribal knowledge with them. A long time coming, this has now become an emergency for many organizations.

As sellers to other businesses, these trends not only affect your company, they affect your customers.

This session will explore the perils and opportunities presented by these forces. It will include several exercises to help participants evaluate the implications for their own organizations. If we want to skate to where the puck is going to be, we need to understand these fundamental economic and demographic forces.

Driving Customer Satisfaction in B2B

At the end of the day, customer satisfaction is defined by ... the customer. This means you can only be really good at it if you understand what your customers are truly buying.



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“I thought Steve was great – ideas that I can implement and show results now.” - CFO

Often, this is quite different from what you are selling.

A simple example: You may be trying to sell “value-added” services to the purchasing agent at an industrial plant, but what she is really buying is a way to show her boss how much money she saves the company. Following this simple example, the key to the agent’s heart is not actually saving the customer money; it’s giving her a clear way of showing cost savings, regardless of how real they may be.

World-class companies work hard to understand and act on this type of customer insight. They use it to prioritize and measure service improvements, define growth strategies and allocate sales and marketing resources. In short, they are market-driven and strategically led.

This session will explore the connections between customer satisfaction, customer buying behavior, revenue growth and business strategy. It will include:

- Defining satisfaction based on segmentation, satisfiers and differentiators
- Future forces affecting B2B sales and how they impact customer expectations
- Evaluating market gaps to set priorities and stay ahead of the competition

Each topic will include individual exercises for participants.

The Future of Brands

One of the most powerful and relevant market forces for distributors and their suppliers right now is the fate of major brands. In the B2B space, brands exist as a way to reduce product research time. As our customers downsize, squeezing more and more out of fewer staff, the imperative to save time is growing.

However, the advent of almost infinite information available means it often takes less time to make a more informed choice than ever before. These twin forces are driving the evolution of brand power. This is the dynamic behind everything from private label to channel conflict to margin erosion. This session shows participants how to evaluate these forces for their business and take practical steps to stay ahead of the competition.

This session covers:

- An overview of the forces driving brand evolution
- Lessons from other industries
- The concept of scenario planning

A hands-on individual exercise for each participant will show how to apply the scenario planning methodology.

Secrets of Strategic Execution

This session provides powerful but practical methods for improving top- and bottom-line performance. It is based on proven insights from leading companies. These leaders succeed not by the brilliance of their strategies but by their ability to harness the full power of their entire organizations.

And they start with a clear picture of why their customers really choose them. (Hint: It’s probably not just the products you sell.) They align their reporting structures and incentives around this reality, creating the focus and sense of urgency essential for peak performance.



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“Outstanding! Best seminar I have been to in awhile.” - *Sales Executive*

This session covers:

- Getting focused on your sweet spot to take market share
- Why “spreadsheet strategy” generally fails
- The power of critical constraints for a field sales rep
- Fail-proofing your strategic initiatives and improvement projects
- Creating accountability from the warehouse all the way to the executive suite

We close with a question-and-answer period to give you an opportunity to get Steve’s insight on your situation.

Profit from the Core: The Secret of Market Adjacencies

Many distributors and manufacturers are seeking new pathways to growth. Traditional boundaries are breaking down, with companies seeing their established competitors venturing into strange new products and services, while facing unexpected new entrants. There is a science behind new market growth.

This session takes two powerful books by Chris Zook (*Profit from the Core* and *Profit Beyond the Core*) and tailors the content for the distribution channel. IRCG has a well-developed model to identify these adjacencies that will be shared in detail.

Successful distributors and manufacturers have used these tactics to follow their customers and their suppliers into new markets. Unfortunately, many industries have a regrettable history of abdicating future markets to other players or failing to spot market disruptions in time. Don’t be held hostage to history. The key is to consider your competitive sweet spot with your customers, not the products that you sell. Every company has market adjacencies and they have been in existence for a long time. This session helps participants see them.

Finding Profit Leaks

Do you know which customers and products make money? Most companies sell to a mixture of “gold” customers, which generate outsized profit, and “lead” customers, which actually cost money to serve. The same is often true of product lines, suppliers and even locations. In this session we will show how Activity Based Costing (ABC) can be used to identify the profit leaks in your company.

But be careful! Failing to use the results properly can be dangerous. Companies have literally gone bankrupt taking the advice of profit optimization “experts.” This session helps participants understand the correct application of customer and product profitability. It also explores the best ways to turn this information into practical actions that can boost your bottom line (and your top line!) almost immediately.

Topics include:

- Understanding cost-to-serve and customer profitability
- The pricing death spiral
- Using vendor profitability analysis for negotiation
- Operations improvement and re-engineering
- Critical constraints



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“This really hit the mark!
...Thanks for a really
unique approach to a very
difficult problem.”
- *President*

Mining Margins in the New Economy

This session outlines powerful but practical methods for improving profitability. It is a four-hour program designed for purchasing, inventory and sales executives. Each of the three major topics includes an overview of best-in-class thinking, exercises to apply the concepts to your company's specific situation, and group discussion to share experiences and takeaways.

Topic 1: Buy-Side Margin Improvement. This topic shows you the keys to buying smarter. It covers areas including:

- Time management and transaction automation
- Vendor performance measurement
- Line profitability assessment

Topic 2: Sell-Side Margin Improvement. This topic covers the basics of pricing optimization, including:

- Beyond cost plus - market and sensitivity pricing
- Pricing analytics
- Organizational recommendations
- Quick win procedure fixes

Topic 3: The New Future. The next 10 years are likely to be significantly different from the past. This topic helps you consider potential game-changers such as low-cost channels and supply chain management.

Winning Through Channel Partnerships

The most successful partners don't try to hide their differences, they leverage them! In this session Steve will explain how manufacturers and distributors often fail to get full value from their channels because they operate under fundamentally different profit models. Steve will show how economics drive companies to adopt different business models and often set divergent priorities.

He will cover examples of best practices in channel management from various industry verticals and share the results of IRCG research in this field. Participants will leave with a clearer picture of the role their channel partners play in helping them grow their business.

Specific topics include:

- Understanding the fundamental sources of miscommunication and frustration
- Ways to measure relationship effectiveness and health
- Balancing negotiation and open partnership
- Mechanics of “enterprise effectiveness” and the sources of inefficiency
- Amplifying sales through bundling, specialization and joint account strategies

This session will show how to unlock the full power of real partnerships and reveals the secrets for increasing channel effectiveness. It will include an individual exercise and (voluntary) audience-sharing of partnership issues and opportunities.



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“Well worth the wait. A strong presentation that truly impacted my plans moving forward. Thank you!” - *VP of Business Development*

The Anti-Training Seminar

Many companies misdiagnose performance issues as training problems. A lot of money and time is invested only to have the problem or challenge remain. The question is: “How do I get them to do what I want?” The answer seems to be: “More training.” While training works effectively to fix skill deficiencies, these are often not the critical constraint to better performance.

In our experience, the vast majority of performance problems can be linked to a lack of strategic clarity, poor communication of expectations, and misalignment of incentives. This session provides a quick but powerful diagnostic to help participants determine which are the root source of the issue. If nothing else it helps them save a lot of money going down blind alleys!

With this session, participants see that, in many cases, there are faster and more practical solutions to these challenges than training.

The Strategically Driven Supply Chain

This session is about using supply chain technology as strategic enabler, not just a tool to increase efficiency. The key is having a world class product marketing function. Steve shows how high-performing companies use this to:

- Turn inventory into a weapon to grow sales and improve return on assets
- Optimize cash flow and service levels
- Prioritize automation investments and calculate ROI
- Identify market opportunities
- Buy smarter in a turbulent economy



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